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REASONS

Against raising an

~~Parliament~~ 68

Army of ROMAN CATHOLICKS

IN

IRELAND.

IN A

LETTER

TO A

MEMBER of PARLIAMENT.

Hibernicus

DUBLIN:

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SOME
R E A S O N S
Against raising an
Army of ROMAN CATHOLICKS
IN
I R E L A N D.

Clonmell, March 7, 1762.

S I R,

IT is, with equal surprize and indignation,
just now I am informed, that five thou-
sand men are to be raised in this Kingdom
for the service of a foreign Prince; surprized,
that any man should dare to make such a pro-
posal to our government, and not a little moved

with indignation, that it should be readily accepted. That such a number of Papists should be incorporated together under Papist Officers, in a country scarce able to defend itself against them, when dispersed, and unlicensed as they now are to bear arms, is a thing, at first view, so astonishing, that nothing but the actual execution of such a design, can with me gain it credit, or induce me to think, that the Protestant interest of this kingdom is so little regarded by ourselves, or our neighbours; that our lives and properties, are to be trifled with; and so fair an open given for an invasion on both, by either foreign or domestic Foes.

Though I no way doubt, you see this scheme (if such a one there be) in a more extended view, with all its consequences, than I pretend to do; yet, permit me to lay before you my own sense, as well as that of all I converse with, and suppose to be friends to their country, of this, to us, very strange proceeding.

In whatsoever light we view it, we see nothing but certain, very great distress, and, probable, ruin to this nation. To begin with the least of our distresses: if the scheme take effect, such a number of useful hands taken out of counties, already half unpeopled, must put an end to
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tillage and manufactures there, or, at least, lessen the value of land, by raising the price of labour, if it prove practicable to get labourers at any price, which seems not likely to happen; and the depopulation must encrease, more ways than one, till at length, those counties become absolute desarts: for, it is not only the loss of so many present hands will be felt, by taking such a number away; but the irretrievable deficiency which must happen in a succeeding generation, through want of increase, will, at last, end in desolation; the wives and children of many will go along with them; the recruits, unlimited because unknown, will be a perpetual drain, till half the kingdom becomes half a kingdom of beasts, instead of men; the gentry, at best, will be only graziers, and their lands, in some places, hardly worth the quit-rent.

This, I say, will be, in all appearance, the least evil to befall us, if this design take effect; and if we should go to enumerate the dangers may arise from it, to the Protestant interest of this kingdom, the safety of our government, in Britain as well as Ireland, and the present establishment of both, it were difficult to say where we should begin, or where we should end the catalogue.

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We are told these men are to be delivered over to a foreign Prince, and to become his subjects. Are they to be his subjects as soon as lifted, and is he to inlift by his own officers here? it may be answered, by officers paid by him, but still subjects to the king of England. I deny it, they are subjects of the Pope, and him only do they mentally acknowledge; they may swear allegiance to King George, and abjure whom you please, both are venial, when heresie is to be suppressed, and by the Council of Trent (the *Magna Charta* of Popery) they stand absolved beforehand.

I ask again, are these men to be armed here? if not, how are they to be disciplined, unless with sticks, as was done in king James's time, when the good duke of Ormond refused them arms, though he could not prevent their being raised; if they are to be armed, they will be good auxiliaries to the *Levellers*, now ravaging one quarter of the kingdom. It may be said, their commanders will be answerable for their fidelity: Can they answer for their own tenants, who, it is notorious here, are the ringleaders of these *Levellers*?

But this danger is more trifling to what may arise from another quarter, it will be an everlasting

lasting and licensed resource for France to fil her Irish Brigades from, and make them truly Irish, which they are now only nominally, there not being one in three Irish, but Scots, Germans, Lombards, or any but French, that they can pick up. It may be said, they will be conducted carefully to another Power ; grant it ; but will that Power hinder their deserting to France, by whole brigades ? or will not their commanders connive at their desertion, when they can so readily recruit them here, and do a double service to France, by supplying it with men, and making another Prince pay for them.

It is jesting with common sense, and perpetual experience, not to mention the rooted principles of Papists, to say it can be otherwise. France is the object of their blind love, and implicit adoration ; to aggrandize which effectually, they would give body and goods in this world, and willingly make some stay at Purgatory in the next ; did they ever or could they conceal their joy when any success has attended the arms of France ? They who live among them know they cannot, whatever awkward professions of the contrary, the more artful and disguised among them may make ; they have no other hope of establishing the religion they are bound

bound to spread and promote, by the very nature of it (if I may use the expression where all is unnatural and inhuman) but by having the power of France encreased to a degree, that will brook no controul, but will deal out Crowns and Sceptres at pleasure, till it be in their favourite phrase, " One God, one Faith, one King over Europe."

The condition of this kingdom is, perhaps, the most peculiar on earth. *Two thirds* of her people, to use their own intimidating words in a late address to the publick, sworn enemies to the Constitution, as it stands in Church and State; ever plotting to weaken the props and pillars that support it; making daily proselytes to their designs among the unwary, the timorous, and the selfish, who are otherwise no friends to these designs, though they forward them on an expectation, that it will do no hurt to indulge them in this and t'other concession, not an inch of which purchase they ever let go, but rise in their demands on every fresh condescension. I say, considering this, is it not amazing they should find friends and advocates among the entrusted guardians of that very constitution these people are labouring to overthrow? and yet, amazing as it is, I am told it is so, not only among ourselves, but among our neighbours too.

The

The whole proceeding of this affair has something in it unaccountably mysterious, if, as I am told, it is now denied, that the scheme had its rise here as was first said, from an offer made by the principal Roman Catholicks, and their proposals forwarded for approbation and strongly recommended over; if so, why this secrecy? if it was recommended from the other side, it is equally difficult to be accounted for, unless we suppose one or other of these two cases, either that the M——y there are utter strangers to the circumstances of this Country, or else, that they make light of any misery they may involve us in, to serve any purpose, however trifling, of their own. In favour of their honour and fidelity, I am inclined to suppose it was the first of these that gave birth to the scheme, and not any inclination to sport with our undoing. People, at a distance, naturally suppose, that no man who holds the reins of Go——t is ignorant of the genius and constitution of the people to be governed; but it has been otherwise, and may possibly be so *now*; and the writer of this letter most solemnly declares, that he was witness to the surprize testified by one in very great station, when he was informed, that Popery was not the established religion of Ireland. But although supreme ignorance was the cause, it seems strange it should not have been correct-

ed by those here who had an opportunity of consulting with the most intelligent, and best affected in the kingdom, before they entered on a measure so apparently hurtful in its consequences ; for I am bold to affirm, and think I can prove, that wherever this scheme was hatched, whoever midwifed it to the world, or nursed and fostered it up after, the wit of man could not have invented another so probably effectual to deliver this nation into the hands of France, at this critical conjuncture, of boundless conquests and unparalleled indolence, on the side of G—— B——n.

By the success of his Majesty's arms in all quarters of the world, and the pusillanimous spirit of their own innumerable armies, the *house of Bourbon* is become an object of contempt, rather than of terror. But though her force be despicable, her machinations may be formidable. Scandalously mean, though preposterously proud, not ceasing to glory in the midst of shame, she has recourse to the vilest means that a dastard spirit can devise, or bigotted cruelty can execute, to compass the ends of her wild ambition, and inhuman revenge. Invasion and massacre are the last effort her despair has to make. The attempt is desperate, but it may succeed, though every wise precaution

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tion, with the most determined bravery, were put in use to prevent it : and much more likely to succeed, if it should happen, that the means used to prevent it, prove effectual to forward it ; and that those, who have the direction of affairs, keep their eye on one object only of advantage, whilst others stare them in the face, that threaten inevitable ruin.

It is said, the *necessity of the measure* is sufficient to justify the proceeding, and is a saying worthy of the dregs of a long, weak and ever gulled ad——n. It has been, and not out of memory, a *necessary measure*, to help our enemies to beat our fleets and armies ; to set coward commanders over them ; and, if that were not sufficiently provident, to order those very cowards, the better to prevent mistakes, not to molest the enemy, or hinder their operations against us. It has been a *necessary measure* to bribe the generals of armies in the pay of England, to induce them to march, though they refused to fight, a few miles from their quarters. It has been a *necessary measure* to permit a major-general of France to raise armies in Ireland for the French King*, though to the great honour of our Government here, they refused to obey the order, and the design was set aside.

* 1732.

It were endless to enumerate the *necessary measures* that a blundering M——y has adopted, and were necessary for nothing, but their private profit or security; and are we now to have another *necessary measure*? I would ask, necessary for what? I know nothing it can be necessary for, uninformed as I am as to the extent of the Scheme, but the depopulating half the kingdom, and assisting France to make good terms, when her friends here shall be formidable, or after being transported shall join her there. If it is said, “to secure the dominions of a foreign Prince our ally,” it is nonsense. That Prince will be secure, or undone, before these men can aid him, unless the rumour of so many brave fellows coming to his assistance, (who, by the way, are not overfond of him) may terrify his enemies, and spread the same fright over their dominions, that the *wild Irish* did once over England. But they know the Irish too well to be afraid of them. They desire nothing more than to see them embodied under popish Officers, and popish Chaplains for their instructors; they’ll soon be on their side; and though the Irish have them not in the same adoration with the French, yet they love them as well, as being, they are sure, descended from them, and being better loved of them than by French, who use them like dogs,

dogs, though they are the chief strength of their armies. There is a mutual hatred between the subjects of the Prince they are to defend, and the Irish, and however willing we may be to give them, if he is any thing wiser than we are, a thing at present very possible, he will not trust them in the heart of his dominions.

It is proposed by some I have conversed with, that though they are to be raised under the notion of serving in Europe, they should be sent to *America*, to replace the like number of protestant soldiers there, who should go in their destined place; but this I cannot in the least credit, nor suppose our government capable of such a base proceeding, though something very like it has been pretty recently done elsewhere.

Though I tire you with the length of this letter, I must beg your patience to touch only on some more inconsistencies of this scheme, with others strongly recommended by our g——t. On the first rumour of it, all recruiting for the corps just voted in parliament was over; the papist volunteers reserved themselves for these, where their commanders, as well as themselves, should be catholick, their serjeants, corporals, and drummers, [if drummers of that religion may be had] as well as chaplains; all
which

which were to be, as they thought, their companions. Those of the papists who had listd in protestant corps, [where, it must be owned, they have been serviceable,] began immediately to desert in numbers, and, until the scheme should take effect, have joined a new levy begun hereabouts under the name of *White-boys*, or *Levellers*, which last too are become stout, on the hope of being incorporated with the other.

Now, sir, it must be a very *necessary measure* indeed, that indispenfably must be taken with all these, and many more unforeseen evils attending it. It must be a measure on which, one would think, the safety of Great Britain depended ; for as to that of *Ireland*, it is a secondary consideration, and may be thought of at leisure. If I am not right in this conjecture, I shall make no other, only observe, that on the last quarrel between our old ally and his neighbour, admiral *Norris* went to his assistance with ten line ships, and frigates in proportion, all to be paid by our ally ; who might have paid them, and, was said, did pay them, but for certain *England* paid them too : no small sum for left hand uses.

For a farther encouragement to our *Catholick* friends, I am told, you are passing a bill to repeal, in good part, the *acts for preventing the growth*

growth of popery; or, which is the same thing, a *bill to forward the growth of popery*, is now under your consideration; it ought to be well considered, and, I hope, if it passes, it will be in a full house, and not insidiously carried through by interested people, or by small numbers.

I have heard it urged, that you should do well to repeal all those laws. If so, our forefathers were not so wise as we are; and yet appearances are on their side, that [I mean only in this point] they were wiser than is possible for us to be now. They were witnesses to the temper and behaviour of *Papists*, before checked by these laws, and when the spirit of popery had a full range to exert in, and they experienced its fatal effects. Will you say, it is a different thing now from what it was then? Impossible, it is always the same, ever temporizing, yet ever true, to the invariable maxims of holy church, in religion and government. To extend the first, by extirpation of heresie; and the second, by exciting rebellion against all states and kingdoms, that do not own her empire over them to be just and of right divine. *Irish* popery, 'tis true, in some degree, differs from other popery where it is the established religion. The notion of being oppressed, that is, not at liberty to do what we will, gives an additional malignity to what is malignant

malignant in itself, and whets the mind to acts of revenge and cruelty. Hence we may account for the unparalleled inhumanity it exerted in the times of *Charles* and *James* in this massacred country, and will be exerted again when opportunity offers. It is a jest to say, it is different now from what it was then, save only in this single instance; it was then a tyger let loose, and is now a tyger chained; will you slip the chain? Do, it is but an experiment, and if it fail your expectation in the event, by all means fasten it again.

I am, &c.

HIBERNICUS.

F I N I S.

